

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Perry Watson

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Watson, Perry, 1951-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 11, 2017
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2017
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:36:51).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Automobile sales entrepreneur Perry Watson (1951 - ) was a regional sales manager for the Xerox Corporation and became the third African American in the United States, and the first African American in Indiana, to own a Lexus dealership, Lexus of Mishawaka. Watson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 11, 2017, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2017_126
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Automobile sales entrepreneur Perry Watson was born on April 16, 1951 in Muskegon, Michigan to Perry Watson, Jr. and Roberta Burns. He graduated from Muskegon Heights High School in Muskegon, Michigan and received his B.B.A. and M.B.A. degrees in marketing from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1973 and 1976, respectively, and later graduated from the Chrysler Corporation's Minority Dealer Training program in 1993.

In 1977, Watson joined the Xerox Corporation as a copier salesman and was promoted to regional sales manager in 1980. Watson was also a member of the Detroit United Concerned Employees group at Xerox, an organization of African American Xerox employees. After thirteen years with Xerox, Watson participated in the Chrysler Corporation's Minority Dealer Training program. After he completed training, Watson was selected to manage North Star Dodge in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota in 1992. He rebranded the dealership to Brookdale Dodge and remained as manager for nine years. In 2001, Watson became the third African American in the United States, and the first African American in Indiana, to own a Lexus dealership. He owned Lexus of Mishawaka, Indiana and sold Brookdale Dodge in 2004. Watson was also a guest professor of marketing at Western Michigan University and taught courses in the Entrepreneur Lecture Series at the Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics at Indiana University, South Bend.

Watson received the Upward Bound Program Honor, the City of South Bend Drum Major Community Service Award in 2008, and the Mid-Eastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program's TRiO Achiever Award in 2012. Both of his dealerships have earned multiple awards for customer satisfaction and market leadership in sales. Watson was also named a top 100 dealer by *Black Enterprise* for twenty three consecutive years, and received the South Bend Rotary Club Distinguished Citizens Award in 2014.

Watson was a member of the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce, the Elkhart Chamber of Commerce, Omega Psi Phi fraternity, the Indiana Auto Dealers Association, and became chair of the National Association of Minority Dealers in 2015. He was also the vice president of programs for 100 Black Men of Greater South Bend and a member of the Entrepreneurial Advisory Committee for the Beacon Health System Memorial Hospital, and served as chair of the board of Memorial Hospital of South Bend, Indiana. Watson was also active in the Urban League, the Boys and Girls Club, and Jack and Jill of America.

Watson has four children.

Perry Watson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 11, 2017.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Perry Watson was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 11, 2017, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Automobile sales entrepreneur Perry Watson (1951 - ) was a regional sales manager for the Xerox Corporation and became the third African American in the United States, and the first African American in Indiana, to own a Lexus dealership, Lexus of Mishawaka.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Watson, Perry, 1951-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Watson, Perry, 1951- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Automobile Sales Entrepreneur

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, August 11, 2017. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:42 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:26 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:34 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_004, TRT: 4:30:23 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_005, TRT: 5:37:43 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_006, TRT: 6:31:01 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_007, TRT: 7:29:56 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_008, TRT: 8:34:16 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Perry Watson, Section A2017\_126\_001\_009, TRT: 9:25:50 ?